

Annual Meeting/Orientation
Michigan Department of Human Services
Citizen Review Panels (CRP)

February 7, 2007, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Michigan Public Health Institute, Interactive Learning Center

Members Present: Child Death CRP-David Blocker, Brenda Fink, ACSW, Rosemary Fournier, Lindsay Gross, Heidi Hilliard, Brian Hunter, MD, Clay Jansson, Greg Jones, Vincent Palusci, MD, Linda Scarpetta, Deb Simms, MD, Shannon Stotenbur-Wing, MSW, Jackie Wood, Steve Yager. Prevention CRP-David Blocker, Alan Stokes. CPS, FC, Adoption CRP-Colleen Duhm, LMSW, Mary Mehren, Pat Sorenson, Pat Wagner.

Members Not Present: Child Death CRP-Soleil Campbell, MSW, G. Paul Cloutier, Teri Covington, Sandra Frank, JD, Shirley Mann Gray, LMSW, Virginia Harmon, Joseph Marshall, MD, Margaret Penninger, Frank Vandervort. Prevention CRP-Tamera Vander Ark, Sherry Arends, Rosalynn Bliss, MSW, Kelly Chesney, Annamaria Church, MD, Shirley Dietlin, Mary Gager Anderson, Joan Jackson Johnson, PhD, Guadalupe Lara, MSW, Bill Newhouse, Honorable Thomas North, Alyssa Martina, Janene McIntyre, Wendy Moncada, Doug Paterson, MPA, K.P. Pelleran, Tom Quasarano, Alex Ramon, Jack Shepard, Janet Snyder, Mei Wang, Richard Bearup. CPS, FC, Adoption CRP-Gloria Gillespie, Judy Labovitz, Christine McPherson, Ted Melinat, JoAnn Monghan, Alice Thompson, Honorable Tracey Yokich.

Meeting Minutes

- I. Welcome: 10:00 – 10:30, Mary Mehren, Director, CPS and Foster Care, Michigan Department of Human Services

Mary welcomed everyone. Everyone introduced themselves and indicated to which CRP they belonged. Mary went through the materials in the binders/folders. (Binders for new members, folders for members that attended the 2005 orientation meeting.) Mary indicated that the annual report is due to Colleen Duhm by March 31, 2007. The annual report is submitted to Director Udow and DHS is required to respond within 60 days.

- II. Federal Update: 10:45 – 11:15, Blake Jones (Teleconference)

Blake Jones called in to give the federal update. The Children's Bureau is becoming more active in CRPs, especially Region IV. Region IV hosted a region-wide CRP meeting.

When Congress reauthorized the CAPTA Legislation in 1993, an efficiency study was required to be done on CRPs in 2006. No news on the results of that study at this time. Dr. Palusci asked about evaluation and how we would be deemed efficient. The Child Death CRP has looked at their first set of recommendations

and determining what has changed at DHS as a result of those investigations. Blake indicated that CRPs would be deemed efficient if they actually changed the child welfare system.

National CRP Conference in Lexington, KY, May 23-25, 2007. Blake will forward Colleen Duhm more information on the conference.

Kentucky recently completed an evaluation of its CRPs. Blake can provide a copy if it is wanted. Blake indicated that it is a good model if we want evaluate Michigan's CRPs.

Blake was asked about the "citizen" component of the CRPs. Blake indicated that the federal government gives a lot of leeway to states on how the state handles their individual CRPs. However, we should have citizens (not related to the child welfare system) as a part of our panels. Congress intended for the panels to consist of citizens from the community. If we only have professional people, we are lacking a different voice. Blake indicated that we need to be very purposeful and careful about who to select as citizen representatives and people have to be given time to learn. Blake has some training materials for members of CRPs.

Blake was asked about funding for CRPs. The CAPTA legislation says that states are supposed to give support to the CRPs as requested by the CRP. The CRPs may need to "push" DHS to get the support they need, including financial support. Some states get creative with the partnerships they develop and many use PhD students.

Discussion on Blake's Presentation

There was a lot of discussion after Blake's call about whether we should have citizens as part of our CRPs. Everyone agreed that we should look at this issue further and that we should have some citizens involved to meet the federal requirement. It was indicated that citizens can offer a valuable perspective. There was much discussion about the sensitive topics the CRPs cover and how to select citizens. Should there be background checks (criminal history/CPS)? Where do we get a pool of candidates? How would the selection process work? Colleen Duhm will follow-up with Blake on this issue and forward the information to the entire group. A smaller workgroup may be developed to discuss this issue further.

III. Panel Presentations: 11:15 – 12:15

- Child Fatality Citizen Review Panel

Dr. Palusci presented on the Child Fatality CRP. He presented many statistics on the child abuse/neglect related deaths in Michigan. There are more deaths from neglect than there is from abuse. There were 58 maltreatment deaths in 2004. The child death CRP made eight recommendations to DHS in their

annual report, seven of them new in 2007. This CRP recently reviewed its recommendations to DHS over the years and has obtained feedback from DHS about changes that were made at DHS due to these or related to these recommendations.

- Children's Trust Fund (Prevention CRP)

Alan Stokes, presented on behalf of the Prevention CRP and Rich Bearup of the Children's Trust Fund. The Prevention CRP has not been that active this year. The CRP is in the process of rebuilding. Alan did not have anything to report on the Prevention CRP's activities for 2006 or future activities. Alan provided information on the Children's Trust Fund (CTF) instead and handed out CTF's annual report.

- Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice (CPS, Foster Care, Adoption CRP)

Pat Wagner reported on behalf of the chair, Gloria Gillespie. The CPS, FC, and Adoption CRP has struggled this year to find an issue to review. Several ideas were discussed that were later found to be projects of different groups. The CRP wanted to look at permanency issues for youth and it was learned that DHS has a State Permanency Taskforce for Foster Care Youth.

The CRP looked at the issue of foster children not getting their allowances, which is part of the foster parent payment, with the following results:

- Allowance for a foster child is discussed in foster care training in CWI, but not a focus of the training. They will try to stress this more.
- Connie Norman at DHS will make this a stronger focus in the foster parent handbook. She has already started working on this.
- The Foster Parent Association and the PRIDE trainings will give this more of a focus.
- Information will go to the Youth Advisory Board to make sure this goes into their "Youth Rights" brochure.
- It was decided that Foster Care Policy should not be changed relative to this issue.

The CRP has begun a new project to explore Judge Tacoma's concerns (from his 2005 article "Lost and Alone on Some Forgotten Highway – ASFA, Binsfeld and the Law of Unintended Consequences") in more depth by gathering additional data to confirm the casual connection between the statutory provisions and the significant increase in terminations and the resulting creation of "state legal orphans". If there is a casual connection, the next question to be addressed is whether the current state statutory termination provisions truly operate in a child's best interest and if not, how the laws should be changed. It

was learned that SCAO has a workgroup on this issue. This issue will be discussed further by the CRP.

IV. Lunch: 12:15-1:00 (Provided)

V. Panel Meetings: 1:00 – 2:00

Did not have time to meet as individual panels.

VI. Panel Reports: 2:00 - 2:30

Panel reports not needed because panels did not meet individually.

VII. Closing-2:30 - 3:00, Verlie Ruffin, Children's Ombudsman

Verlie Ruffin, Children's Ombudsman, presented on the importance of Michigan's Citizen Review Panels. Verlie explained the legislation behind the Office of the Children's Ombudsman (OCO) and discussed how the OCO and CRPs are important to the functioning of the child welfare system.